

## BOX ELDER COUNTY (UTAH). COMMISSION <sup>[1534]</sup> MINUTES, 1856#

**DESCRIPTION:** These minute books record the actions of the county commission, the governing body of the county. The commission (known during the territorial period as the county court) was authorized to manage all county business and property. This includes budgeting, equipment purchasing, and auditing; use of county lands, which in the territorial period emphasized water and timber rights but by statehood focused on roads and planning; districting for schools, roads, voting, drainage, etc.; taxing, specifically acting as an ex-officio board of equalization; business licensing; arranging for the construction of roads, public buildings, etc.; contracting for services; supervising the conduct and payment of all county personnel; providing for basic health care, public safety, and care of the indigent; canvassing election returns and appointing certain officials; incorporating municipalities; and by the late 1950s, zoning and planning.

Following the formation of territorial government, the legislature in 1852 passed acts relating to the formation and government of counties. There were no county commissions, but the probate judge in conjunction with the county selectmen were invested "with the usual powers and jurisdiction of County Commissioners" and as such were known as the county court. The probate court clerk (also known as the county clerk) was to keep the records of the court.

The court was authorized to manage all county business and county property. This included auditing all claims against the county and payments by the treasurer. The court controlled all timber and water privileges and could grant mill sites and herd grounds. Court members created election precincts, road districts, and school districts and appointed superintendents of such districts. They located sites and oversaw the erection of public buildings. The selectmen in conjunction with the court were to provide for the maintenance of the poor, insane, and orphans. They levied property taxes for county purposes. They were also responsible for any litigation involving the county.

All these activities are noted in the minutes. The day's entries are prefaced by date, names of

those present, where and when they met, and often who gave the prayers. Bids received, and bills and wages paid in conjunction with the activities are noted. The predominant activities in the first decades involve laying out roads, bridges, and irrigation canals. Names of individuals appointed as water superintendents, road supervisors, or other county officials (e.g. collector, bee inspector, physician, pound keeper) are mentioned frequently, often with reports on their specific projects. Individual names and actions taken are also noted for the indigent, insane, and infirm.

In 1860, the legislature mandated that liquor licenses be obtained from the county courts; butcher licenses were added in 1865. In 1884 the legislature mandated that business licenses in general be obtained from the county courts for operation in unincorporated county areas; most applications were for liquor licenses. Provisions were also made that year for the county court to approve the incorporation of towns. The court's role in tax assessment and tax sales also becomes more apparent by the end of the century.

With statehood in 1896 an actual board of county commissioners was created. The probate judge was removed, but the selectmen continued serving as commissioners until elections were held. The county clerk remained the clerk of the board, recording the minutes.

There is an ongoing emphasis on roads and road districts. Other responsibilities noted in the minutes include supervision of the conduct of all county, district and precinct officials, boards, and agencies. Commissioners served as canvassers of elections also appointing election officers, setting the boundaries of voting districts, and assigning polling places. The members continued as a board of equalization for county property assessments with the added authorization to refund taxes erroneously collected. They continued to care for paupers and oversee public health and safety. They maintained a salary fund, granted licenses, franchised utilities, passed ordinances, and issued bonds. A major addition to their functions was made in 1941 when the commission was empowered to provide for the development and zoning of unincorporated areas of the county and to appoint a planning commission, although the board did not begin to adopt zoning regulations until 1958. The entries become progressively more detailed and inclusive. In particular, major functions of licensing and contracting, taxing, budgeting, and zoning are extensively documented.

Business licensing information includes name, type of business, business location, and action taken on applications. Where the county had a more direct interest, detailed contracts are recorded, as in the cases of utility franchises, county leases of property or services, and cooperative agreements made with governmental agencies or private corporations. Cooperative agreements assume a major role by the 1970s, dealing with emergency services, transportation, social services, weather modification, etc.

Adjustments on individual property tax assessments are similarly itemized as are detailed resolutions concerning tax sales, particularly in the 1920s. Entries recording the commission's role in tax abatement are common in the 1930s, noting the tax amount and the description of the personal property or location of the real property involved. Use of the pauper fund also increases by the 1930s. Such proceedings frequently include a brief discussion of the family's

personal and financial circumstances as well as the county's determination of what relief to allow.

All personnel actions are recorded, by individual name, for county employees from nursing home laundry supervisor to auditor. Such actions include appointments, hourly or salaried wage increases, requests for car allowances or to use county vehicles, and requests for funds to attend conferences. Requisition and bid proposals are similarly detailed covering everything from a single typewriter for the clerk's office, to vehicles for the sheriff's department, to gravel for major road department construction. Both personnel allotments and departmental purchases form part of audits and annual budgets, although these are just a dollar value per category/department.

By the 1970s, details on zoning changes, attracting corporations, and layout of subdivisions assume a major place in the minutes. Information recorded relates to applications for zoning changes, zoning hearings, and release of escrow funds following specified improvements.

**ARRANGEMENT:** The series is arranged chronologically by date of meeting, although reel 18 was filmed in reverse chronological order.

**RESEARCH NOTE:** Given the diversity and extent of the county commission's activities, the minute books should be consulted not only by researchers seeking information on the commission, but by those seeking information on any county agencies, their personnel, or their services to individuals; on private contractors and their plans for work on county projects or private subdivisions; on private businesses operating within the unincorporated county limits; and on private individuals or charitable institutions holding taxable or untaxable property within the county. Virtually any person living in, or any activity taking place in, unincorporated areas of Box Elder county (up to and including the incorporation or disincorporation of municipalities) was affected by the activities of the county commission and is reflected in the minutes.

**RELATED RECORDS:** Series 6068 contains indexes to these minutes. Also, while the minute books summarize the meetings of the commission, many other county agencies recorded the particulars. Thus the other holdings of the county commission and other Box Elder county agencies should be consulted.

**PROCESSING NOTE:** The Box Elder County Clerk as secretary for the Box Elder County Commission should be contacted for other holdings. Although unscheduled, the retention for the series has been given by the analyst as microfilm and then destroy paper copy; paper copy is stored in the office until filming. Filming was begun in 1966. The series was processed by A.C. Cone in December 1994 and updated in April 1995. The index which appeared on reel 3 was removed to form part of series 6068; another copy of the same index on reel 11 was discarded. Reel 18 was filmed in reverse chronological order. On reel 12, there is no way to

tell on the film where volume 1 ended and volume 2 began.

**GAPS IN THE SERIES:** The existence of any volumes C and D are unknown; there does not appear to be a chronological gap between volumes B and E.

### CONTAINER LIST

Reel	Description	Volume
1	1856, Jul	A
	11#1878, Aug 17	
1	1878, Sep	B
	9#1886, Sep 20	
2	1886, Sep	E
	6#1893, Oct 23	
2	1893, Oct	F
	30#1898, Apr 18	
3	1898, Apr	F
	4#1899, Dec 18	
3	1900, Jan	G
	2#1906, Aug 7	
4	1906, Aug	H
	7#1912, May 31	
4	1912, Jun	I
	3#1920, Apr 3	
5	1920, Apr	J
	3#1927, Jun 6	
5	1927, Jun	K
	7#1931, Aug 3	
6	1931, Aug	K
	3#1932, Apr 18	
6	1932, May	L
	2#1936, Apr 20	
6	1936, Apr	M
	20#1939, May 1	
7	1939, May	M
	1#1940, Dec 16	
7	1940, Dec	N
	30#1948, Dec 31	
7	1949, Jan	O
	4#1949, Nov 7	
8	1949, Nov	O
	7#1953, Jul 27	
8	1953, Aug	P
	3#1959, Jun 15	
9	1959, Jun	P
	15#1959, Dec 28	

<b>Reel</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Volume</b>
9	1960, Jan	Q
	4#1964, Dec 28	
9	1965, Jan	R
	5#1967, Jul 25	
10	1967, Jul	R
	25#1969, Jun 3	
10	1969, Jun	S
	16#1973, May 1	
11	1973, May	T
	3#1975, Dec 30	
12	1976, Jan	1#2
	6#1977, Dec 27	
13	1978, Jan	1#2
	3#1979, Dec 11	
14	1979, Dec	3
	18#1981, Aug 25	
15	1981, Sep	4
	1#1983, Aug 23	
16	1983, Sep	5
	6#1985, Jan 30	
17	1985, Feb	6
	13#1988, Dec 20	
18	1992, Dec	7
	22#1989, Jan 3	
19	1993, Jan 5#Dec 8	
	28	
20	1994, Jan 4#Dec 9	
	27	
21	1994, Dec	10-11
	29-1997, Oct 28	